



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

upon this subject. We remind Mr. Badger of the deep responsibility resting upon him, and of the high expectations formed of his administration. We would entreat the President of the United States to hasten the time when, in the language of his address, “the Navy, not inappropriately termed the right hand of the public defence, which has spread a light of glory over the American flag, in all the waters of the earth, shall be rendered replete with efficiency.”

ART. IV.—*Oeuvres de George Sand.* Bruxelles : Meline, Cans, et Compagnie. 1839. Trois Volumes. Grand in-8.

THE powers of external nature become an object of study and reflection to the man of science, not only in their quiet and ordinary operation, by which the chain of being is preserved and the machinery of the universe does its work, but also in those occasional starts and aberrations, which at irregular intervals appall the observer and seem to menace the destruction of the whole fabric. The invisible and mysterious fluid, which many consider to be the hidden cause of the secret affinities and repulsions by which the primary particles of dissimilar substances act on each other, and hence as one of the most beneficial and efficient instruments in nature's laboratory, at times collects itself in fearful force, to rain in fire from the clouds, cleaving the firm-set oak, prostrating the rock-founded labors of the architect, and stopping by a single touch the issues of life in man himself. The springs of motion around and above us, which keep the mass of the atmosphere from stagnating and generating disease, sometimes also send forth the tornado, as it were to sweep a track of ocean and land with the besom of destruction. Volcanoes and earthquakes, sudden famine and epidemic disease, are alike objects of research to the curious student of nature with those peaceful phenomena, recurring at fixed periods, which make the earth the garden and palace of man. Often, indeed, the violent and unlooked-for outbreak supplies more pregnant hints than the ordinary workings of physical agents for the explanation of Nature's laws. The exception

suggests the theory, the accident makes known the principle. And the mind also is most effectually stimulated to its work, when a sense of danger impels us to investigate causes, and knowledge is courted not merely to gratify curiosity, but to afford protection.

So it is in the moral and intellectual world. The morbid anatomy of mind is studied, that the philosophy of health may be properly understood. The corrupt and pernicious products of a diseased literary taste, a reckless will, and a licentious imagination are held up as a warning, or carefully probed in order to lay bare the seeds of the evil, which may exist also in other soils, and there again at another time bring forth their appropriate harvest of sickness and death. That is but a blind caution, which would lead us to study only the healthy manifestations of life, and to pass silently over the baneful tokens in certain subjects, which show that maladies exist, and perhaps are eating out the very core of existence. Equally unwise is it to palliate the evil, by representing it as temporary, or negative, or weak, and therefore leaving it to be eliminated by chance and the lapse of time. The violence of the symptoms proves, that a robust constitution is attacked, and the crisis of the complaint may even increase the natural strength of the patient. To speak without metaphor, literary power may exist for evil as well as good, and even transcendent ability may be, and often is, exerted in disseminating paradox, sophistry, and skepticism. The evil cannot be successfully met by underrating it, or by undervaluing the power which is scattering it abroad. Bad books may be written with wonderful talent, and the merits of their execution may be freely admitted, while we point out and strive against their destructive tendency, and mourn over the prostitution of genius that appears in their pages.

Thus much by way of apology to our readers, for calling their attention to a contemporary, who, though belonging to another nation and writing in a foreign tongue, is already known to some among us, and whom the present taste for foreign literature and novel opinions may come hereafter to make a favorite with many. Within ten or twelve years, an extraordinary change has come over the spirit of French literature. After continuing for centuries in a cold and pedantic imitation of classical models, a Romantic school has suddenly risen up, and is now working with all the vigor and activity,

which usually accompany or produce great revolutions in literary opinions. Corneille and Racine have palled upon the taste, and the appetite now calls for the more exciting and perilous food, which the writers of *la jeune France* endeavour to supply. Time was, when Voltaire called Shakspeare a barbarian, when the delicate nerves of a French audience could not bear killing on the stage, and when their scrupulous taste rejected with disgust that mixture of farce and tragedy, that alternation of smiles and tears, of which nature and the old English drama present such frequent examples. *Mais nous avons changé tout cela* since the revolution of 1830. The French are imitators still, though Shakspeare and Goethe, Hoffman and Walter Scott, are now the models, and have pushed from their pedestals those nondescript figures of Greek gods and heroes, dressed in long periwigs and laced coats, which presided so long over the fortunes of the stage and the destinies of literature. As usual, the violence of the reaction has carried taste to the opposite extreme, and the spirit of the middle ages is now caricatured as remorselessly by modern French authors, as was the genius of Greece and Rome by their immediate predecessors. What is deformed, horrible, and grotesque, is now introduced not merely as an element in art, but to the exclusion of what is calm, beautiful, and pure. Violence is now done, not merely to the rule of the unities, which so long weighed like an incubus upon the genius of Gallic playwrights, but to all the laws of probability, consistency, and homogeneousness, which form the essence of the creative and imitative process. The guests at the literary banquet now sup full of horrors ; and all the springs of terror, violence, and crime are set in motion to stimulate their dis-eased and jaded appetites.

Of course, the change has not come peacefully about, or without strenuous opposition from the adherents of the former school. But the defenders are only a few literary veterans, Chateaubriand and others, *donati jam rude*, who, shut up in their last fortress, the French Academy, wage a feeble warfare against their youthful and fiery assailants. Even this position is at last invaded, for after a canvass of years, and great agitation of spirits and shedding of ink, Victor Hugo, the Corypheus of the new school, has just obtained the honors of the session, and is now enrolled among the "Forty." Dumas and Balzac must soon follow, and the abolition of the

Salic law may possibly be marked by crowning Madame Dudevant with the laurels of an academician. The populace have sided with the innovators, and the stage, which at Paris has even more influence than the press, of course follows the guidance of the many. Romance and the drama, indeed, have been the chief points of success with the modern school, and the mass of readers are, therefore, enlisted under their banners.

We have no inclination to trace out the characteristics of this singular revolution, any further than they may appear in a brief examination of the merits of the writer, whose works are now before us. Nor should we have alluded to the subject, if it were not that the peculiarities of our author, when viewed only in connexion with what was the spirit of French literature some dozen years since, would appear more startling and unprecedented than they really are. George Sand is but one of a numerous school, though in point of literary power, perhaps the first among them, not even Hugo excepted. Her writings are affecting, not merely the literary taste, but the political, religious, and social opinions of her countrymen, and are deeply interesting as a study, whether we consider them as producing, or produced by, the general fermentation of spirits, that is now going on in France. *Her* writings, we say, not forgetting the distinction of genders, for it is well known, that George Sand is a mere *nom de guerre*, under which Madame Dudevant chooses to appear in the authors' lists. Respecting her personal history, little can be ascertained from the thousand rumors with which the gossips of Paris amuse themselves, while speculating on the singularities of her character and writings. It is known, however, that, being unhappily matched in early life, she chose to set at defiance the laws of morality and the opinions of the world, by eloping from her husband and forming a connexion with another person. Scandal adds many piquant particulars of her impatience under the restraints which nature or custom have imposed on her sex, and of her desire to ape the manly character ; that she smokes cigars and wears a frock coat, to say nothing of other habiliments, which are usually monopolized by the lords of creation. Such tales, whether well founded or not, would not require an allusion here, if they were not in keeping with the eccentricities of her published

theories, and did not manifest the impression that her works have given, respecting her private history.

The bulk of George Sand's writings consists of tales and romances, some fifteen or twenty of which have already appeared, following each other from the press in such quick succession as to evince great fertility of invention, and a perfect command of her resources. Some of them are novels, properly so called, with a due proportion of events and characters. Often, however, there is but a slender thread of incident, on which are hung copious disquisitions upon philosophy, religion, and social life. Sometimes the story is cast in a dramatic form, though evidently not intended for the stage. But, whatever garb her works assume externally, they are all pervaded with one purpose, and tend constantly in one direction. The same morbid imagination, the same gloomy and passionate spirit, at war with the world and the allotments of Providence, and discontented with itself, appear everywhere in her writings, and give a sad image of the temperament and feelings of the author. None but a mind and heart thoroughly diseased could pour forth such effusions, while the impetuosity of manner, the vivid descriptions, the eloquent portraiture of passion, and the richness of style prove, but too evidently, that a noble nature has gone astray. In point of vigor and originality of genius, she may well be classed with Rousseau, or, if the comparison be confined to her own sex, she may be placed even higher than Madame de Staël. She is less affected than the latter, and her style, equally rich, is more condensed and energetic. For eloquent and imaginative writing, the most brilliant passages of "*Corinne*," when placed beside many chapters of "*Indiana*," or "*Valentine*," will gain nothing by the contrast. Her pages bear no marks of the various, but rather superficial, learning, which appears in the "*Allemagne*," but her observation of life, though tinged by a morbid temperament, is even more keen, while her picturesque and glowing descriptions display a more perfect appreciation of external nature.

But the parallel, which these volumes naturally suggest, lies between their author and "the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau." We see in each the same wayward direction of a richly gifted spirit, the same ardent delineations and intense sensibility, pictures of life shadowed with similar gloom, and an equal command over the sympathy of the reader. Both

quarrel with the present institutions of society, and, setting its laws and censure at defiance, lose themselves in dreams about another condition of mankind, as fantastic and impracticable as a sick brain and a corrupted moral sense could well devise. A similar vein of egotism pervades their writings,—a disposition to make a confidant of the whole world, and to call for its sympathy by a free disclosure of individual passions and sufferings, of wearied affections and buried hopes, of both external and inward causes of unhappiness peculiar to themselves. Such revelations mark the inconsistency and waywardness of a singularly compounded character. The assumed lover of solitude, the pretended misanthropist, really lives only in the presence and sympathy of other men, whom he strives to interest and attach by throwing open without reserve the inmost sanctuary of his being, and exposing to the public gaze those shrinking thoughts and delicate communions with self, which ordinary mortals conceal with jealous and fearful care.

There is a difference between the two writers, however, in the manner and purport of these auricular confessions to the public. Rousseau tells every thing, down to the most trivial details. George Sand exposes, not the history of her life, but her character and feelings. She is silent about the external facts, but eloquent in expounding the sentiments and passions, to which the incidents have given rise. She is continually drawing her own portrait, though not writing her autobiography. The heroine in nearly all her tales, the central figure about whom all the interest and scenery are grouped, is a sister image to Byron's half fanciful, half real personation of self,—a proper consort for his gloomy and perpetually recurring hero. Of the two conceptions, perhaps hers is the more life-like and striking; it seems to embody more of actual experience, to be copied more faithfully from the life. Such a character is that of Indiana, in the novel of the same name, a work conceived and written with a greater flow of feeling,—with more of what the French call *épanchement de cœur*,—than any other of her productions. The character is that of a woman, who unites a morbid sensibility to an ardent temperament and great strength of purpose; in whom passion may burn with an intensity, that will threaten the frail though beautiful frame-work of life; who is harassed and oppressed with the weight of ties, which others find a consola-

tion and support ; and who appears, at first, wasting away under mere inanity of feeling, — the patient, but dejected supporter of an objectless existence. At last, the heart finds its object, and the once smouldering fire breaks forth in all its power. She loves "not wisely, but too well," in defiance of the world's law and to the wreck of her own hopes, with an intensity only increased by the coldness, ingratitude, and utter worthlessness, of the favored mortal. Woman's love, according to this conception of it, is like the terrible and remorseless *Fate* of the ancient mythology, ever at hand to control her existence, vanquishing her reason, overruling all foresight, precaution, and delay, and, at last, conducting with sure steps the devoted subject to the loss of happiness and life. The passion comes unasked, must be offered where it is not sought, grows by insult and neglect, and finally destroys. Man is the unworthy and impassive recipient, — the terror, the master, the tyrant, of his feeble but nobler companion.

Such is the bitter view of woman's situation and destiny, drawn by a female hand, and charged with a depth of feeling and eloquence of manner, that speak plainly of drawing from personal experience. It is the outpouring of a mind, unconscious of moral restraint or religious hope, which has needlessly courted warfare with the opinions and institutions of the world, and found the punishment of its folly and wickedness within itself. A brief but energetic expression of her creed is put in the mouth of a favorite character. We dare not copy the whole, even by leaving it without translation. "*Infâme tyrannie de l'homme sur la femme ! Mariage, institutions, sociétés, haine à vous ! haine à mort !*"

As a theorist, our author is not entitled to the praise of originality. She would destroy the whole constitution of society as it exists at present, but has nothing to offer as a substitute except some indefinite notions, borrowed from Rousseau, respecting the freedom, simplicity, and happiness of mankind in a state of nature. The restraints imposed by human legislation are to be done away, the yoke of superstition is to be broken, the comforts and luxuries of civilized life to be resigned, and man is to become again an inhabitant of the woods, following no rule but that of appetite and impulse. A fierce attachment to the doctrines of liberty and equality, manifested as much by hatred towards all rulers and governments, as by sympathy with the governed, or pity for

the oppressed, is the basis of her political creed. Join to these opinions the wildest form of Mary Wolstonecraft's doctrine respecting the rights of woman, and you have the whole system of opinions, the inculcation of which appears to George Sand a more important object, than to interest her readers by pictures of real life, or astonish them by the products of an ardent and fertile imagination. Such doctrines are more the growth of temperament and passion, than of unsound reasoning, or of a curious and speculative understanding. They exist as feelings rather than reflections, and are supported not by sophistical arguments, but by appeals to sentiment and by varied illustration. They are avowed and defended with perfect earnestness and sincerity ; and one might even be pleased with the eloquent and fanciful garb in which they are arrayed, perfectly secure against any danger from such extravagances, if the enjoyment were not checked by the gloom and misanthropy, which are continually breaking forth throughout these remarkable writings.

There must be something wrong in the constitution of the particular society, something unsound or corrupt in public opinion and practice, where such speculations as these take root and flourish, where not only writers are found to give them utterance, but a community to read and approve them. The present state of manners in France, we fear, too plainly exemplifies this remark. Marriages commonly formed from convenience without regard to inclination, the forms of religion remaining where the spirit and practice have long since died out, the general licentiousness of conduct which is the natural effect of such causes ;—these are circumstances that would nearly justify a sensitive and partially diseased mind, which has some noble aspirations left, in giving vent to anger and regret at the view of a society and institutions producing such miserable fruits. That hotbed of civilization, a corrupt European capital, where refinement has passed into the worst form of elegant epicureanism, and debauchery is licensed by examples in high places, where the minor morals are lost sight of in the search after gain, and greater laws violated in the pursuit of sensual pleasure, presents a succession of scenes, in view of which a mind of a gloomy and imaginative cast may be pardoned for looking back with regret on the rudeness, ignorance, and simplicity of savage life. But we have no patience with such speculations, as we have

sometimes heard them caught up and repeated, in places where circumstances offered neither pretext nor palliation for their enormity. Government and laws, marriage and the other institutions of society, all the refinements of civilized life, are no toys to be pulled in pieces or thrown away at the suggestion of a crack-brained theorist, a disclaimer about universal liberty and equality, or an enthusiastic admirer of savage simplicity. They are the gifts of Providence to a later generation, the slowly matured inventions of ages for the comfort and support of an otherwise weak, brutish, poor, and solitary being.

There are many passages in these volumes which repel sympathy by the spirit of gloom and violence which they exhibit, and not a few which will shock merely English readers from their indelicacy. The writer is resolute in her determination to unsex herself in the general tone and execution of her works, in the boldness of her theories, and the warmth and freedom of her descriptions. But, in spite of her efforts, the woman's pen appears throughout, — in the keen-sighted observation of life, the susceptibility to strong passion excited by comparatively trivial causes, and in the feminine acquaintance with all the intricacies and windings of the human heart. Notwithstanding many objectionable passages, she does not appear an intentionally licentious writer. In many particulars a different standard of delicacy, in respect both to action and conversation, exists among the continental nations of Europe, particularly in Italy and France, from that which obtains in England and America. On this subject, there is a good deal which is merely conventional in national codes of manners. What is only delicacy and propriety in one place is esteemed prudishness and false shame in another ; whilst the state of morals in practice in the two cases may be the same, or, at least, not necessarily worse in the latter place than in the former. This different rule and estimate of shame may or may not appear in the literature of the two countries. While writers are occupied on subjects apart from everyday life, or are imitating a factitious model, an equal degree of purity will be preserved throughout their works. On the point of which we are now speaking, Corneille and Racine, — even the French classical school of the present day, Delavigne and others, — are unexceptionable. But the Romanticists attempt to delineate life and manners as they are, to hold the mirror up to the present nature. Greater license, then, appears in

their writings to foreign eyes, but it is not necessarily apparent when regarded from their point of view. A Parisian is not shocked by certain expressions and passages in novels and plays, is even unconscious of any cause of offence in them, because he daily hears and sees what is there described, while an English or American reader would throw the book into the fire. Both judge and act rightly, for what is harmless to the one is poison to the other. We may take an instance nearer home. The grossness of Shakspeare's comedies cannot now be tolerated on the stage, although they were first exhibited before a virgin queen, and a portion, at least, of the remaining audience belonged to the polite and refined classes. We apprehend there has been some illiberal, because mistaken, criticism in this respect on the modern French school, and we therefore explain the grounds of dissent from the harsher judgment. There is matter enough for regret and indignation in the view of George Sand's works, but we do not believe her style to be intentionally gross and corrupting. Would that we could say as much for some living English authors, the outside of whose productions is far more pure, but the intent and the actual tendency much more debasing.

Our account of the spirit and manner of this novelist must be taken with some qualifications, if applied to the whole collection of her published works. It is intended only for those among them, which are most characteristic of her genius, which are written with the most freedom and power, as the voluntary outpouring of a mind seeking the confidence and sympathy of the public, and not as a mere author by profession. The popularity of her books, the consequent urgency of publishers, and perhaps the calls on a stinted income, have made her of late somewhat a hack writer, abusing the fertility of her talent. Some of her later tales are evidently made to sell ; they repeat the objectionable peculiarities of the former ones, but do not bear the impress of equal vigor and originality of mind. Though always well written, there is a repetition in the sentiment and characters, a poverty of invention in the plot, and a general languor of execution, which mark the indolent or exhausted author. Sometimes her admiration of German models leads to an affected mysticism and inflation of style, which are not wholly redeemed by great exuberance of language and forcible delineations of passion. One be-

comes impatient of fantastic displays of the imaginative faculty, and can hardly admire brilliant passages, when ignorant of the writer's general drift.

The least exceptionable of her writings, which affords also some glimpse of her theories and shows much of her peculiar genius, is the novel of "Mauprat." The plot is exceedingly simple, and the incidents rare, which is the case indeed with most of her tales. The scene is laid a few years before the opening of the French revolution, in a wild district of the western part of France. The hero of the story, Bernard Mauprat, by the early death of his parents, is thrown into the power of his uncles, who, sprung from a noble stock, but of a fierce and brutal character, lived together in the family castle, and by their violence and excesses became the terror and scourge of the vicinity. The ruined remnant of a family long distinguished for the outrageous abuse of its feudal privileges, their necessities have at last converted them into open brigands, who, entrenched in their stronghold, set at defiance the feeble police of the district, and by cruel exactions and robberies without, obtain the means of supporting their excesses and revelries within their walls. The interior of the gloomy tower of Roche-Mauprat, the character and life of its savage inmates, and the horrible scenes created daily by their riotings and cruelties, are all sketched with great vigor and distinctness. Thrown among them from infancy, wholly destitute of instruction, and the object of his uncles' wanton barbarity during childhood, the hero grows up a young savage, as fierce, daring, and hardened as the infernal crew with whom he is surrounded. The head of a younger branch of the same family, the Chevalier Hubert de Mauprat, is desirous of rescuing his young relative from such a life, and offers to adopt him as his heir; but the older Mauprats refuse their consent, and the Chevalier, that his fortune may not come into the possession of these wretches, marries, and gains an object for his affection and cares in an only daughter, who is left motherless at an early age.

This daughter, Edmée, having lost her way in the forest after a hunt, and being caught in a storm, takes refuge in the castle, being ignorant of the horrible character of the place and her savage entertainers. She is intended by them for a fate worse than death, and is allotted as a prey in the first instance to the young Bernard. An attack of the *maréchaussée*

upon the building calls away the elders, and the two cousins, each about seventeen years of age, are left with each other. She learns from him her situation and what awaits her, and though he now ascertains for the first time their relationship, it does not alter the brutal purpose of the young brigand. An admirably managed scene follows, in which, amid the din of the assault that is going on without and all the terrors of her position, she rallies her courage and woman's wit, and endeavours by promises and appeals to his nobler nature, to shun his violence, and even to persuade him to aid her escape from the castle. She succeeds at last; but as he is deeply enamored of her beauty, it is only after an oath, confirmed in the most solemn manner, that she will afterwards become his wife, that he consents to spare her and accompany her flight. She exacts from him a pledge, however, that he will keep this oath an inviolable secret, even from her father. The cousins escape by a secret passage, and soon after the attack by the soldiery succeeds, the castle is burnt, and nearly all the older Mauprats are slain. The good old Hubert de Mauprat receives Bernard with rapture as the preserver of his daughter's honor, adopts him into the family, loads him with kindness, which he receives like a young bear, and endeavours gradually to tame his ferocious and brutal spirit, and by education to convert him into a civilized being. The whole remaining plot of the novel turns upon the gradual success of this benevolent undertaking. It is the old story of Cymon and Iphigenia, or the brute who is tamed by love. Bernard is intractable enough at first, burns his books, menaces his relatives with a dagger, and keeps the whole house in confusion and terror. The only hold upon him consists in his ardent affection for his cousin, who with admirable tact works upon his sombre and furious moods, and gradually kindles up the sparks of a better and noble disposition, that lie beneath.

The character of the noble and charming Edmée is developed with great skill, suffering hardly a taint from the writer's erratic and gloomy philosophy of woman's nature. She is early touched by seeing the sparkles of Bernard's better nature, and loves long before she has ceased to fear him, while she is yet appalled by the recollection of the terrible and secret oath which knits their destinies, while she even wears constantly a knife to protect herself by death from his brutality. Through her watchfulness and energy, by the power of alter-

nate smiles and frowns, she leads the young wolf-whelp, as it were, with a silken thread, to the successive efforts by which he becomes an instructed, gentle, and true-hearted man. We must not forget one of her coadjutors in this good work, one who has not much to do with the business of the piece, but occupies a large portion of the canvass, because he is the exponent of George Sand's peculiar philosophy. Patience, as he is termed, is a rustic and self-taught philosopher, after Rousseau's model, a stoic in morals and an infidel in religion, who lives in the woods, feeding upon roots, and passes for a wizard with the peasants and a heretic with the church. A rooted dislike of labor or restraint of any kind has kept him wholly ignorant, for he cannot even read; but his shrewd and penetrating intellect supplies the place of books, and enables him to confound the worthy curate, who, undertaking to call back this stray sheep to his flock, ends by becoming himself more than half a convert to the dreaded heretical opinions. An incident of Bernard's childhood makes the beginning of his acquaintance with Patience after an ominous fashion; for having wantonly shot a tame owl, the only companion of the solitary, he receives a severe castigation from the indignant old man. Some boyish magnanimity of Mauprat, who does not take vengeance when he had it in his power, afterwards conciliates the good will of the recluse, and the two finally become fast friends. We must give our readers a glimpse of this favorite character in the writer's own words, as a specimen of her manner. In the following extract, it is Bernard who speaks,—the whole novel being written in the first person. He is wandering out of doors by night, in a fit of mingled anger and shame, having just suffered some reproaches from Edmée for his rudeness and want of docility.

“ I was passing through some open pasture grounds, where clumps of young trees, placed here and there, threw a shade over the soft herbage. Large light-colored cattle rested motionless upon the short grass, and appeared as if absorbed in meditation. Towards the horizon rose some gently sloping hills, and their tufted summits seemed to sport in the pure moonlight. For the first time in my life, I felt the voluptuous beauty and the sublime emanations of the night. I revelled in some mysterious enjoyment; it seemed that for the first time I beheld the moon, the hillocks, and the prairies. I remembered having heard Edmée say, that there was no finer spectacle than that of nature, and I was surprised at not having

learned this truth before. At times I thought of kneeling down to pray ; but I knew not how to speak to Him, and I feared to offend by improper supplications. Shall I confess to you a singular fancy which came upon me like a childlike revelation of poetical love through the chaos of my ignorance ? The moon shone so broad and clear, that I could distinguish the smallest flowers among the herbage. A small meadow daisy seemed to me so beautiful, with its white kerchief fringed with purple, and its golden chalice full of diamond dew-drops, that I plucked it and covered it with kisses, crying out, — “ It is you, Edmée ; yes ! it is you ! I hold you ; you can no longer fly from me.” But what was my confusion, when raising my eyes, I saw that there was a spectator of my folly. Patience was standing before me.

“ I was so angry at being surprised in such an act of extravagance, that by an involuntary recurrence to my old fierce habits, I fumbled at my girdle for a knife ; but I had no longer either girdle or dagger. My silk waistcoat with pockets made me remember that I was bound to stifle my cut-throat disposition. Patience smiled.

“ ‘ Well, what now ? ’ said the recluse, in a calm and gentle manner ; ‘ do you think I do not know what the matter is ? - I am not so simple, but that I can understand something ; I am not so old, but that I can see clear. Who is it, that shakes the branches of my yew tree, every time that the dear girl seats herself at my door ? Who is it, that follows us like a young wolf, with cautious steps among the coppice, whenever I am leading back the pretty child to her father ? And what harm is there in all this ? You are both young, both handsome, you are kindred, and if you only willed it so, you might become a worthy and excellent man, as she is a pure and noble maiden.’

“ All my wrath subsided, at hearing Patience speak of Edmée. I had such a strong desire to converse about her, that I would even listen to reproaches, for the sole pleasure of hearing her name pronounced. I continued my walk side by side with Patience. The old man walked with naked feet in the dew. His feet, indeed, from the long disuse of shoes, had become so callous, that the roughest path did not affect them. His only covering consisted of trowsers of blue cloth, which, for want of suspenders, fell down to his hips, and a coarse shirt. He could not suffer any restraint in his dress, and his skin, hardened by exposure, was not sensible either to heat or cold. He has been seen, up to eighty years of age, walking bare-headed under a burning sun, or with his upper covering opened to the chilling blasts of winter. Since Edmée had watched over all his wants, he had preserved a sufficient degree of cleanli-

ness ; but in the disorder of his dress, and his dislike of every thing which passed the bounds of absolute necessity, — except to avoid indelicacy, which he always hated, — might be seen the cynic of former days. His beard shone like silver. His bald head was so smooth and polished, that it reflected the moonlight like water. He walked slowly, his hands behind his back and his head raised, like a man surveying his property. But most frequently his look was turned to the skies, and at intervals he cut short the conversation to say, as he pointed towards the starry vault, — ‘ See, only see, how beautiful it is ! ’ He was the only peasant, whom I have ever seen to admire the heavens, or, at least, he was the only one who took notice to himself of the admiration.” — *Tome premier*, p. 408.

The attempt to inform the intellect, and refine and soften the character of Bernard, of course, is crowned with ultimate success. But Edmée wishes to obtain from him, as the last proof of generosity, the voluntary relinquishment of the secret promise extorted on their first interview, and with this intention conceals her own love, and torments him by her coquetry. For his passionate affection, uncertain of a return, this bitter sacrifice, as it appears to him, requires a strong effort. But, in a fit of jealousy, he acquires this mastery over himself, sends her release from the oath to Edmée in a letter, and then, in despair, joins the party of the young Lafayette, and comes over to America to fight the battles of freedom. His stay in this country is marked with little incident, except the formation of a friendship with the young soldier and naturalist, Arthur, whose character is lightly, but agreeably, sketched, and the sudden appearance of an old and humble friend, who comes over to join him in contending for the rights of humanity. Marcasse is a sententious and philosophical rat-catcher, an old companion of Patience, whose opinions he has imbibed, while a roving disposition and a quixotic spirit incite him to carry out these theories into action. Six years of absence, hardship, and adventure, complete the probation and establish the character of Mauprat, while his passion for his noble cousin remains still fresh as at its commencement. The following extract describes the return of the wanderers home.

“ When we came near Varenne, we dismissed the post-chaise, and took a short cut through the woods, towards the chateau. When I saw the venerable tops of the trees in the park rise above the undergrowth, like a solemn procession of

Druïds through the midst of a prostrate multitude, my heart beat so violently, that I was compelled to stop. 'Well!' said Marcasse, turning towards me a look almost severe, as if he blamed my weakness; but a moment afterwards I saw his philosophy put to the test by an unexpected cause of emotion. A little plaintive yelping, and the touch of a fox-like tail between his legs, made him start, and he uttered a loud cry as he recognised Blaireau. The poor animal had perceived his master afar off, and had run, with all the swiftness of his younger days, to roll himself at our feet. We thought, at first, that he was dying, for he remained motionless and bent together under the caressing hand of Marcasse; then, suddenly rising, as if struck with an idea worthy of a man, he ran off, at full speed, towards the cottage of Patience.

"'Yes, go and inform my friend, my brave dog!' cried Marcasse; 'a better friend than you, would be more than a man'; and turning towards me, I saw two big drops rolling down the cheeks of the stoical hidalgo.

"There were so many changes around the hut, that I feared I should no longer find Patience in this habitation. Then a greater fear came upon me; our voyage had lasted more than four months, and for a half-year before embarkation, we had heard nothing from the recluse. But Marcasse felt no inquietude; Blaireau had told him, that Patience still lived, and the dog's footsteps, freshly printed on the sand, showed what direction he had taken. At last, I became impatient; the path seemed interminable, though really very short, and I began to run, my heart bounding with emotion. 'Edmée,' said I to myself, 'is perhaps there.'

"She was not, however, and I heard only the voice of the solitary, who was saying; 'Ah! what now? has the poor old dog gone mad? Down, Blaireau! you would not have teased your master thus. See what it is to spoil these creatures.'

"'Blaireau is not mad'; said I, entering; 'but have you become deaf to the approach of a friend, master Patience?'

"Patience dropped upon the table a sum of money, which he was counting, and came towards me with his old cordiality. I embraced him; he was surprised and touched at my joy. Then, looking at me from head to foot, he was wondering at the change in my person, when Marcasse appeared in the doorway. Patience, with a sublime expression, then cried out, as he raised his broad hand to heaven; 'Now would I die, for mine eyes have seen him whom I awaited.' The hidalgo said nothing, but touched his hat as usual, and then, sinking down upon a chair, he became pale and closed his eyes. His dog leaped upon his knees, and showed his affection by a feeble

and repeated yelping. Trembling with old age and joy, he stretched out his pointed muzzle towards the long nose of his master ; but he was not answered as usual, 'Down, Blaireau !' Marcasse had fainted.

" This loving soul, which knew no better than that of Blaireau, how to manifest itself in words, had sunk under the weight of its happiness. Patience ran to obtain a large goblet of common wine, and made him swallow a few drops, the strength of which revived him. The hidalgo excused his weakness, by attributing it to fatigue and heat ; he was not willing, or knew not how, to assign the real cause. There are minds which die out, after having burned with aspirations after all that is beautiful and grand in the moral world, without having found the means, even without being conscious of the desire, of manifesting themselves to others.

" When the first transports had subsided, Patience, who was as communicative as his friend was silent, exclaimed ; — ' Ah ! captain, I see you have no wish to remain here long. Go quickly, then, to the place you are so eager to visit. I promise you, they will be surprised and delighted to see you.' We walked together through the park, and on the way, Patience explained to us the change which had appeared in his dwelling and mode of life.

" On mounting the steps of the chateau, I clasped my hands, and, overcome with a religious feeling, called for heavenly aid, as if with a sense of terror. Some vague fright came upon me ; I thought of every thing, which might prevent my happiness, and hesitated before passing the threshold. Then I sprang forward. A cloud passed before my eyes, and indistinct murmurs filled my ears. I met Saint-Jean, who, not recognising me, uttered a loud cry, and threw himself before me, to prevent my entrance without being announced. I pushed him roughly aside, and he fell frightened upon a seat in the antechamber, while I bounded impetuously towards the door of the apartment. But, at the moment of reaching it, a new fear seized me, and I opened the door so timidly, that Edmée, occupied with her embroidery, did not raise her eyes, thinking, from the little noise I made, that it was the respectful manner of Saint-Jean. The chevalier was dozing, and did not awake. This old man, tall and lean, like all the Mauprats, was now bent with age, and his pale and wrinkled head, which seemed already affected with the insensibility of the tomb, resembled one of the angular figures, carved in oak, which ornamented the back of his large easy-chair. His feet were stretched out before a wood fire, though the sun shone warm into the room, and a bright ray, falling on his white head, made it gleam like silver. But

how shall I describe to you what I felt in watching the attitude of Edmée? She was bent over her tapestry, and, from time to time, raised her eyes towards her father, as if to watch the slightest movements of his sleep. But how much patience and resignation appeared in her whole manner! Edmée disliked needlework; her mind was too serious to attach any importance to setting off one shade of color by another, or to displaying taste in the combination of various stitches. Besides, her spirits were impetuous, and when she was not absorbed in mental efforts, she needed exercise and the open air. But since her father, a prey to the infirmities of age, hardly ever quitted his easy chair, she no longer left him for a moment; and as she could not always read or find mental employment, she felt the necessity of adopting the feminine occupations, 'which are,' as she was wont to say, 'the amusements of captivity.' She had, therefore, heroically overcome the bent of her inclinations. In one of those hidden struggles with self, which often go on under our eyes, while we have no suspicion of the merit that attaches to them, she had not only subdued her character, but had changed her physical constitution. I found her attenuated, and her complexion deprived of that first bloom of youth, which is like the fresh vapor, that the breath of the morning deposits upon plants, and which disappears under the slightest touch, though it withstands the warmth of the sunbeams. But in this premature paleness and rather sickly habit of body, there was an indefinable charm. Her sunken and impenetrable look showed less pride, and more melancholy, than in former years; her mouth, more flexible, showed a more subtile and less scornful smile. When she spoke, it seemed that I saw her in two persons, the old and the new; and instead of losing, in point of beauty, in my eyes, she had completed the ideal of perfection. Yet I heard many say, that she had altered much, which meant, according to them, that she had lost much of her attractions. But beauty is like a temple, of which profane persons see only the external riches. The divine mystery of the artist's thought is revealed only to wide and generous sympathies, and the smallest detail in the great work tells of inspiration, which escapes the notice of the vulgar. One of your modern writers, I believe, has remarked this, though in other and better language. For my own part, Edmée never appeared to me less beautiful at one moment than at another; even in the hours of suffering, when beauty in the material sense appears to fade, hers became holy in my eyes, and revealed to me a new moral beauty, the reflection of which beamed forth in her countenance. Moreover, I have little feeling for the arts, and were I a painter, I could copy but one

model, that with which my heart is filled ; for, in my whole life, but one woman has seemed beautiful to me, and that was Edmée.

“ I remained some moments looking at her, pale, suffering, but calm, a living image of filial piety, of strength subdued by affection ; then I sprang forward and fell at her feet, without power to utter a word. She said nothing, made no exclamation, but clasped my head in both her arms, and pressed it closely against her bosom. In this close embrace, in this mute joy, I perceived the impetuous feelings of our family,— I recognised my sister. The good chevalier suddenly awaked, with staring eyes, one elbow resting on his knee, and his body bent forward, gazed at us as he asked,— ‘ Well ! what is the matter now ? ’ He could not see my face, which was concealed on the bosom of Edmée ; she pushed me towards him, and he pressed me in his old arms with a burst of generous affection, which restored to him for a moment the vigor of youth.” — *Tome premier*, p. 437.

The sentiment and narration in this passage are somewhat spun out, but it is beautifully written, and in a delicate and gentle spirit. *O si sic omnia.* The novel should end here, for the point of interest on which the whole plot turns, the attempt to humanize the character of Mauprat, is now exhausted, and no apparent obstacle remains to the union of the lovers. But the writer injudiciously protracts the story by a display of some idle coquetry on the part of Edmée, and by bringing to life again two of the old brigands, the uncles of the hero, whose malice embroils the action anew, and for a time threatens to be triumphant. One of them, in an attempt to assassinate Edmée, inflicts a severe wound upon her, under circumstances which seem to prove, that Bernard himself, in a fit of jealousy, had fired the fatal shot, and he is therefore put on trial for his life. This ridiculous and improbable incident is contrived, in order that Edmée, being called upon in court to explain the state of feeling between herself and the accused, may recount the whole history of her own love, and explain what seemed enigmatical in its commencement. Her narration, as given, shows a truly feminine experience with the affections, and a delicate observation of the intricacies of feeling and conduct ; but the writer refines too much, and overdoes the work with a minuteness of detail, that spoils the effect. Through the evidence of Edmée, and the circumstances which are brought to light by the courage and fidelity

of Marcasse and Patience, the hero is at last acquitted, and the really guilty are seized and punished. The marriage of the cousins ends the story.

Far different from this generally pleasing tale is the novel of "Valentine," which is even more rich in flashes of genius, but shows more vividly also in its invectives against society, and in its pictures of ardent and gloomy passions, the unhappy and diseased condition of the writer's mind. There is nothing of the cynical spirit, the devilish sneer, with which some of George Sand's contemporaries and countrymen have imitated Voltaire in treating of the institutions of man and the higher interests of his better nature. Our author is too good a hater to assume this careless and mocking air, or to fight with such indifferent weapons. She wars against the moral creed, the existing opinions of the whole civilized world, with a hate that is too concentrated to vent itself in sarcasm. What the law of God and man has branded as crime, she boldly, fiercely, declares to be virtue, and the doer of the act, who suffers from its consequences, either through the natural course of events or from the punishment directly inflicted by an outraged community, is eulogized by her as a hero and a martyr. One of the principal interlocutors in her tale of "Leila,"—which, by the way, is no tale, but rather a dialogue and correspondence between a knot of individuals, all fighting most manfully against the world,—is a branded galley-slave, or, in our phrase, a genuine "state-prison bird," who has imbibed in some inexplicable fashion the most lofty and magnanimous sentiments, and now reasons against society from which he is an outcast, with all the coolness, decision, and certainty of a persecuted philosopher. The drift of the novel which is now before us, the lesson which the writer seeks to inculcate in "Valentine," if we understand it aright, is, that passion and impulse, when sincere, should be allowed their own way, for they have a sanctifying power, and purify from every taint of guilt all actions, however gross, that are committed under their influence. And the work is executed with so much power, such command of pathos in the description of suffering, and so much eloquence of invective, that the reader's feelings are enlisted before he is aware, and he goes on under a species of fascination, though tempted at every moment to throw the atrocious book into the flames.

We can give but a meagre sketch of its contents, for it

abounds in passages, with a mere abridgment of which we cannot sully our pages. The hero is a young man, born in the lowest station of life, and left a poor orphan at an early age, but who has received, through the bounty of an uncle, a wealthy old farmer, an education far beyond that of a mere peasant, and which, acting on a proud and sensitive temperament, has only made him discontented with his situation, his best friends, and himself. Though plain in person, he is gifted with some indefinable attractions, for he secures the affection of three beautiful women, with each of whom in turn he fancies himself enamoured, though his love finally centres on the heroine of the story, the hapless Valentine. One of the three is his own cousin, the only daughter of the good Lhery, to whom he is betrothed with the promise of a large dowry from the indulgent parents. But the pretty Athenais is a village coquette, whose airs and finery have become wormwood to the wayward Benedict, though the poor girl is ardently attached to him, and he once thought himself subdued by her charms. Another despairing *inamorata* is Louise, the daughter of the haughty De Raimbaults, whose *château* is in the neighbourhood of the farm house. She had been seduced, and consequently expelled from her family by a vindictive stepmother, and after wandering a homeless outcast for some years, has at last found a shelter under the roof of the all-benevolent Lhery, though without the knowledge of her relatives. Her superior refinement and education captivate for a time the heart of Benedict, and she really returns his affection, though she suppresses her feelings and treats him coldly, in the fear of appearing ungrateful to her kind but humble benefactors.

The story opens with a scene at the farm house, where the characters of the good farmer and his wife, of the lively and frivolous Athenais, and the pensive Louise, are lightly but pleasantly sketched. The party, except Louise, are on the point of setting off with Benedict to a village *féte* in the neighbourhood, where the noble families and peasants were to enjoy themselves together by a dance in the open air. As a fair sample of our author's skill and taste in describing natural scenery, we extract a portion of the account of their ride.

“ They were passing through one of those green lanes, which are called *traînées* in the village dialect ; — a road so narrow that the little vehicle touched on both sides the branches of the trees, which bordered upon it, and Athenais was able to cull a large bou-

quet of hawthorn, by passing her arm, covered with a white glove, through the side window of the calash. Words cannot express the beauty and freshness of these faintly marked and crooked paths, which go winding capriciously along, under a continuous arbour of foliage, disclosing at every turn a new opening among the trees, still more green and shadowy than the former. When the noon-day sun reaches even to the stems of the tall and thickset grass in the open fields, when the hum of insects is loudest, and the quail chuckls forth his love in the furrows, freshness and silence seem to take shelter in these green lanes. You may walk there for an hour without hearing any other noise than the sudden flight of a blackbird startled by your approach, or the leap of a little frog, green and shining like an emerald, which was sleeping in its hammock of entwined bulrushes. The ditch itself contains a whole world of inhabitants and a forest of vegetation ; its limpid water runs noiselessly on, purifying itself through the clay, and softly caressing its banks of cress, balm, and liverwort ; the tall plants, which are called water-ribbons, and the pendant and fibrous aquatic mosses quiver continually in its little silent pools. The yellow wagtail hops along the sand with an air at once roguish and timorous. The clematis and honey-suckle shade the arbours where the nightingale hides its nest. In the spring time, all is perfume and flowers ; in the autumn, purple berries cover the branches which were the first to blossom in April ; the red haw, of which the thrushes are so fond, takes the place of the flowering hawthorn, and the brambles, spotted with tufts of wool, which the sheep have left upon them in passing, are reddened with the small wild mulberry, so delicious to the taste."

At the *fête*, Benedict, for the first time, sees Valentine, the half-sister of Louise, who comes there in company with her haughty mother and the silly and selfish old Marquise, — a capital sketch, — her grandmother on the father's side. She is escorted, moreover, by M. de Lansac, a smooth and supple courtier and man of the world, to whom she is engaged and shortly to be married. We extract the passage that describes the first impression which her beauty made upon the sickly and sensitive temperament of Benedict.

" She did not please him. He had formed to himself an image, which he did not wish to see destroyed, of a slender beauty, with a pale face, dark and glowing eyes, a Spanish air, and a light step. Mademoiselle Valentine did not realize this ideal type. She was fair, light-haired, calm, blooming, with a form well developed and perfectly beautiful in all respects. She had none of those faults, with which his sick brain had be-

come enamoured by the sight of those works of art, where the pencil, by throwing a poetical air over ugliness, has rendered it more attractive than beauty itself. Besides, Mademoiselle de Raimbault showed a gentle but positive dignity of manner, which was too imposing to charm at the first sight. In the curve of her profile, the softness of her hair, the graceful bend of her neck, and the breadth of her white shoulders, there were a thousand points to remind one of the court of Louis the Fourteenth. One could see that a whole race of noble ancestry was requisite to produce such a combination of pure and noble features, — all those semi-royal graces, which came slowly to view, like those of a swan sailing about in the sunbeams with a majestic langour.

“ An hour afterwards, Benedict found himself carried by the crowd towards the ladies de Raimbault. His uncle, who was speaking to them hat in hand, came to take him by the arm, and presented him to them.

“ Valentine was seated on the turf, between her mother, the countess, and her grandmother, the Marquise de Raimbault. Benedict was not acquainted with either of the three ; but he had so often heard them spoken of at the farm, that he was prepared for the scornful and icy salutation of the one, and for the familiar and communicative reception of the other. It seemed that the old Marquise, by her affable manner, wished to make up for the contemptuous silence of her daughter-in-law. But through all this affectation of popularity might be seen the insolent, protecting air that belonged to a feudal age.

“ ‘ How ! Is that Benedict ? Is that the dear moppet, that I have seen as a baby in his mother’s arms ? Good day to you, my boy ! I am delighted to see you so tall and looking so respectably. You are the very image of your mother. We are old acquaintances, you know. You are the godson of my poor son, the general, who was killed at Waterloo. It was I who presented you with your first frock ; but you recollect nothing about it. Let me see ; how long ago was that ? You ought to be at least eighteen years old.’

“ ‘ I am twenty-two, Madame,’ answered Benedict.

“ ‘ Bless me,’ cried the Marquise, ‘ already twenty-two ! See how time passes. I thought you were of the same age with my granddaughter. You do not know my dear girl ! There, look at her ! Valentine, say good day to Benedict. He is the nephew of the good Lhery, and is to marry your little playmate, Athenäïs. Speak to him, my dear ! ’

“ This request might be translated thus : ‘ Imitate me, heiress of my family ! Become affable and popular, in order to save your head through the revolutions that are to come, as I

have saved mine through those which are past.' But Mademoiselle de Rimbault, whether from tact, habit, or natural frankness, by her look and smile calmed all the anger which the impertinent kindness of the Marquise had kindled in Benedict. He had turned a bold and mocking glance towards her ; for his wounded pride had relieved him in a moment from the bashful awkwardness of his years. But the expression of that beautiful face was so soft and gentle, the sound of that voice so soft and soothing, that the youth bent down his eyes and blushed like a young girl."

The two dance together afterwards, and on the return of the party at night, an accident brings their acquaintance with each other to a still more familiar footing. Valentine loses her way in the forest, and is met by Benedict, who not only acts as her guide, but assists her to an interview with the poor exile Louise. The meeting of the two sisters is described with great simplicity and pathos. Benedict afterwards becomes the messenger between them, and through his agency Valentine frequently visits the farm without the knowledge of her relatives. Her youth and beauty soon efface the recollection of his former loves, and he becomes desperately enamoured of her. There is nothing very strange in this, but it is highly improbable, that his affection should be returned by one in Valentine's superior station, already on the point of a marriage, to which hitherto she has manifested no particular repugnance ; especially, as the young peasant is not represented as possessing any remarkable gifts either of person or address, wherewith to forward his suit. But such is the theory of the tender passion held by the modern Romanticists, that it depends on secret and mysterious sympathies, and thus most frequently manifests itself where there is least cause for its existence. Young people fall in love, as children take the measles or the hooping cough, when often no direct cause of infection can be traced, and the little patient hardly knows what his sickness means. The luckless Valentine remains ignorant of the state of her own heart, till the very eve before the day fixed for her marriage with M. de Lansac. Then an interview with her frantic lover ends only in tears and protestations, and they separate with no plan fixed for the morrow. In the mean time Benedict has quarrelled with the excellent Lhery, and refused the hand of the pretty Athénais, who in mere spite accepts the offer of Pierre Blutty, a wealthy young

boor of the village, and her marriage is to take place on the same day with the more splendid nuptials at the château.

The fatal eve produces some scenes of frightful violence and despair, which the writer describes with great minuteness and force, but which we must pass over entirely. On the next day the heartless Lansac goes off on a diplomatic mission, leaving his still maiden bride in a brain fever, while the miserable Benedict is picked up from a ditch near the château, having shot himself in the head. This event would seem to be the *finale* of his history, for, “the times have been, that where the brains were out, the man would die.” But this law does not apply to the heroes of French romance, who have often as many lives as a cat. The ball had fractured the skull, but life remained, and there were some hopes of his recovery. He is carried to a miserable cottage near by, now his only home, and there carefully nursed by the wretched Louise. The physician having charge of the two patients sagely conceives that the fever of the one and the wound of the other may be benefited by giving them an interview with each other; this event is brought about, and the result answers his expectations. Struck by the frankness and generosity displayed by Valentine, Benedict solemnly pledges himself to respect her innocence, and the pleasure of daily interviews and of unrestrained communication with each other soon reestablishes the health of both. The most affecting character in the group is now Louise, who, with a generous self-devotion and a broken heart, watches over and assists the progress of that love which is the death of her own hopes. The frightful vehemence of passion, which, disregarding appearances before the world, still preserves the purity of its object, is portrayed with a bold and skilful hand. This state of things continues till the return of M. de Lansac, who only takes advantage of the equivocal situation in which he finds the parties, to frighten his wife into making over the whole of her fortune to him, which is immediately sold to pay his gambling debts. The cool and mercenary husband then leaves them again to act as they please, and soon afterwards the news is received of his death in a duel. This event appears to release the lovers from all difficulties, and a union between them is immediately projected. But a frightful accident intervenes, and the history of their affection, always clouded with terror and misfortune, now ends in blood.

Since the loss of her estate, Valentine has found shelter in the house of Athenais, whose husband, Pierre Blutty, ignorant in great part of what has happened, discovers the stealthy visits of Benedict to the farm, and suspects that his own wife is the object of them. Mad with jealousy he waylays the lover one night, and, at the moment of his coming out of the house, strikes him dead with a rustic implement. The body is carried in, and the miserable Valentine is borne in convulsions to her chamber. Louise is summoned from the side of the corpse to attend upon her, and the following scene takes place between the sisters.

“ Louise took a light, and bent down towards her sister. When these two women looked at each other, there was something like a horrible magnetism between them. The countenance of Louise expressed a ferocious contempt, an icy hatred. Valentine, her features stiffened with fright, sought in vain to avoid this terrible gaze, this vengeful apparition.

“ ‘ So,’ said Louise, passing her furious hand through the dishevelled locks of Valentine, as if she was tempted to tear them out by the roots, — ‘ it is you who have killed him ! ’

“ ‘ Yes, it was I ! I did it ! ’ replied the stupefied Valentine, with a broken voice.

“ ‘ It has happened as it should,’ said Louise, ‘ *he* willed it so. He attached himself to your destiny, and you have destroyed him. Well ! finish your task ; take my life also ; for my life was his, and I will not survive him. Do you know what double injury you have inflicted ? Do you not flatter yourself with having effected so much evil ? Triumph, then ! You have supplanted me ; you have torn my heart all the days of your life, and now you have plunged the knife into it up to the hilt. It is well, Valentine ; you have completed the work of your race. It was fated, that all my misfortunes should spring from your family. You have been the true daughter of your mother, — of your father, who also knew so well how to shed blood ! It was you who drew me into these places, which I ought never to have seen again ; you, who like a basilisk, have fascinated and kept me here, that you might devour my heart at your ease. Ah ! you know not how you have made me suffer ! Your success must have surpassed your hopes. You know not how I loved him, — him who is dead. You threw a charm over him, and he could no longer see clearly. Oh ! I would have made him happy ! I would not have tortured him as you have done ! I would have sacrificed for him a vain pride and arrogant principles. I would not have made his life a torment to him. His youth, so beautiful and gentle, should

not have withered under selfish blandishments, like yours. I would not have condemned him to perish, wasted with sorrow and privation. Nor would I have drawn him into a snare in order to give him up to an assassin. No ! He would have been at this moment full of freshness and life, if he had only chosen to love me. Accursed be your arts which prevented him from doing so !'

"In uttering these imprecations, Louise's strength gradually left her, and she ended by falling in a fit at her sister's side. On her return to consciousness, she recollects nothing of what had been said. She nursed Valentine with tenderness, and overwhelmed her with caresses and tears. But nothing could efface the frightful impression, which this involuntary confession had caused. In the paroxysms of fever, Valentine would throw herself into her sister's arms, and beg for pardon with all the terror of madness. Eight days afterwards she died." — *Tome premier*, p. 360.

We have had some misgivings in placing before our readers even such an imperfect sketch of this remarkable work. There is much, which is offensive to sound principle and a pure moral taste, in the very design of such a book ; and its execution and details often outrage, still more directly, all the fixed opinions and delicate feelings of a well-balanced mind.

Great talent displayed in this way forms an object, which we view with mingled curiosity and alarm. It is here occupied on an apotheosis of lawless passion, on an attempt to hallow the law of impulse and appetite, as paramount in obligation to the usages of society, and to all institutions of man's device. The object of the writer is, to enlist the reader's sympathies on the side of Benedict and Valentine, on the side of criminal and misplaced affection, and against the bond of marriage and the cold and heartless people of the world, who wish, forsooth, that this sacred tie should be observed, and that the natural divisions in society should not be broken down. The compromise, which she would effect, with purer and better sentiments is curious. Passion is selfish, seeking only its own end, and in its progress slighting or breaking through the welfare and rights of others. That it may not appear wholly odious, therefore, it must be qualified with a maudlin sensibility, and a fantastic sense of honor. It must make a parade of self-denial, where indulgence would be guilt of treble dye, and take praise to itself for not rushing further than it does, into the abyss of violence and crime. This

affectation of magnanimity, this pretension to a more refined and exalted virtue, where the ordinary principles of morality are coolly set aside, or openly censured, is the most objectionable and dangerous point of all. A false estimate of the comparative value of various feelings and actions, an improper standard of excellence in point of conduct, having regard only to a romantic and impracticable generosity and a destructive vehemence of passion, is at the bottom of the pernicious influence, which writers of this class, the school of over-heated romance, constantly exert. May our own literature of fiction never be visited with a similar spirit, or undergo a crisis like that of the “*Storm and Pressure*” period in the history of German letters, the vigor and freshness of which form no compensation for its corrupting stimulus and debasing tendency!

We have exhibited enough of the matter, which George Sand works up into her novels, to show, that a single passion,—the favorite one, it is true, of imaginative writers,—forms the groundwork in most of her plots, and supplies the chief interest of the story. Her harp has but one string; the burden of her song is “*love,—still love.*” It is a dangerous topic to speculate about, and her philosophizing turn gives rise to theories, which are fanciful and erratic enough. The most singular of her whims is one to which we have already alluded,—the idea of representing woman as the victim of this passion, as the first to acknowledge its power, and, therefore, as compelled to beg a return of affection from those by whom it is grudgingly yielded, or totally withheld. Nearly all her heroines fall in love before they are asked to do so, and then go whining about, complaining of the coldness of other people’s hearts, when they ought only to strive against the over-warmth of their own. This notion of our author is the more remarkable and inconsistent, because, in every other respect, she shows herself such a resolute champion of the rights and superior endowments of her sex. The tyranny of man is the constant object of her invective, and the contrasts which she draws between the various characters in her novels, are often any thing but flattery to the male part of creation. Well,—the old-fashioned theories, on this point, were doubtless framed by those same “*odious men-creatures,*” and if there is any disposition now to revise the decision of past ages, it is but reasonable, that the court should be opened, and an impartial

hearing granted to the fair advocates. We will trust, without any over anxiety, to the verdict of a jury, composed in equal proportions of the most enlightened and sensible of both sexes.

One of the most pleasing, yet melancholy, of our author's shorter stories, André, comes directly in point in this connexion. We can give but a brief sketch of it from memory, as the book is not at hand. Woman's superior fortitude and strength of purpose forms the lesson to be illustrated. Geneviéve is a poor girl, destitute of education, relatives, or friends, who leads an entirely solitary life in a small village, supporting herself by making artificial flowers, and enjoying, as her sole recreation, an occasional ramble in the fields, in search of natural ones. A beautiful picture is drawn of this uninstructed but loving child of Nature, with her innate feeling of purity, which leads her to guard by the strictest seclusion against the contaminating influence, the joyous but over-free society of those of her own sex and condition ; and of her passion for plants and flowers, in studying and imitating which, she finds amusement and support. The son of a neighbouring *seigneur* meets her once or twice in her excursions, and, of course, falls desperately in love. But her shrinking delicacy, and the modest prudence of her mode of life, throw great obstacles in the way of his attachment. Still, his own amiable and timid character, and her thirst for knowledge, gradually smooth the way ; beginning as her instructor, he is gradually installed as her lover. An imperious and brutal father, of whom he stands in great awe, creates all manner of difficulties ; but in spite of his opposition and the pressure of circumstances, true love finds its way. The hitherto sleeping energies of this delicate and beautiful girl are finely brought out and contrasted with the sickly irresolution and moral cowardice of her admirer. He falls dangerously sick, at last, from disappointment and vexation, and she braves all obstacles, forces her way into the house, overawes even the coarse and violent parent by the dignity and resoluteness of her manner, and, by her presence and watchful care, restores the love-sick youth to health. They are finally united, and the exasperated father banishes him from the house. Absolute want now menaces the young couple, and the feeble André cannot even muster resolution enough to compel his unjust parent to surrender a small property, which is his by inde-

pendent right. His noble companion supports both him and herself by the proceeds of her unremitting toil, and strives to prevent him from sinking into utter despondency. Still, the supply obtained by her labor is scanty, and actual privation rapidly wears upon an originally delicate constitution. Her fair fame had suffered before their union, and the sense of shame, the struggle against her husband's weakness and melancholy, and apprehensions for the future, gradually waste her powers, and bring on a fatal illness. She dies just when a better fate in life had opened upon them, and her husband is content to live and mourn for her.

Nothing can be more simple and touching, than the outline and filling up of this interesting story. It is written with spirit and tenderness, the characters are sketched with graphic force, and the scenes of pathos are skilfully touched, without being over-wrought. The heroine is a charming ideal, a floweret, which seems so fragile, that a breath would scatter its leaves, yet clinging to its stem with a tenacity that marks a really vigorous growth. By her side, the poor-spirited and wavering André, yielding to the storm which he has not the resolution to face, sinks almost below pity. It forms an affecting picture, this being of superior station, education, and sex, looking for consolation and guidance to one for whom nature and circumstances seemed to point him out as a guardian and protector. But we are not sure, that the illustration will count for much in Madame Dudevant's theory and argument. The relation between the two parties in her story is striking, because it is new, and the chances are not much in favor of its frequent occurrence in real life. It is the good fortune of woman, occupying her present position in society, that exigencies do not often call forth such traits of character, even if they exist, and she ought rather to rejoice at the absence of any such occasion, than to long for a struggle with circumstances, that might exhibit her latent energies. But our author is not satisfied with this state of things, and returns to the defence of her speculations on this head in her dramatic sketch of "Gabriel." In this little work, more power is displayed, than in the one just noticed, though the morality of it is more questionable, and the chief incidents of the plot are fantastic, not to say extravagant and absurd. But there is great liveliness in the piece, and so much spirit in the characters, and variety in the action, that

we almost wonder, were it not for the abrupt termination of the play, that the Parisian theatre, which is not over scrupulous or delicate in catering for the public, does not appropriate it for the stage. The author may have written it with that intent, but we believe it has never been performed.

An old Italian prince, Jules de Bramante, has two sons, Julien and Octave, with the younger of whom he has quarrelled, and he therefore desires, that the title and estate may descend to the family of his favorite Julien. But the latter is childless, while Octave has a son, to whom, as the property is entailed upon the male heirs, it would seem that the inheritance must finally devolve. To the great joy of the old prince, however, a child is at last born to Julien, though it loses both father and mother almost at the moment of its birth. But unluckily the child is a girl, and the vengeance, which the old man had promised himself against the disobedient son, seems once more to escape his grasp. Italian cunning suggests a remedy for the difficulty. The secrecy of the nurse being secured, the infant is given out to be a son, is named Gabriel, and being sent off to a remote and secluded estate, is there actually treated and educated as a boy, under the care of an old preceptor and one or two ancient domestics. Not only is every care taken to keep the secret from the child herself, till the eve of her majority, when the truth is to be disclosed to her, but her education, which is very complete, is especially designed to inspire her with hatred and contempt for the sex, to which she actually belongs. The plot succeeds perfectly, and when the play opens with a visit of the aged Jules to the guarded retreat, he finds his grandchild perfectly versed in all manly exercises, with an open and courageous disposition, and, as yet, without any suspicion of the deceit, which has been carried on. But she has noble sentiments and a warm heart, and when the truth is disclosed, she breaks out into a passion of tears at her singular fate, at the wrong which has been done to others, and the deception to which she has been an unwitting party. Here is a fine field, evidently, for the development of the writer's opinions respecting the injustice done to woman, and the false position, which is assigned to her by the verdict of society.

Another act opens with the adventures of Gabriel, or Gabrielle, as she must now be called, who, retaining her male

attire and designation as the young Prince de Bramante, sets off in search of her cousin Astolphe, whom she is determined to recompense for the wrong done to him by the malice of his grandfather. This Astolphe is a young scapegrace, whom imprudence and dissipation are constantly involving in difficulties, whence he is hardly rescued by fine talents and an open and courageous spirit. She finds him in a den of infamy, where she in fact saves his life by killing with her own hand one or two bravoes from a band, who attack them both in the hope of booty. When Astolphe learns that his young defender is the hated heir, who stands between him and the family honors, he at first rejects her proffered kindness; but he is finally overcome by her frankness and generosity, and consents to share her fortune. The two become inseparable friends. Some gay scenes follow, where Gabrielle plays her manly part to perfection among the wild companions of her cousin, while she insensibly falls in love with him, and he is troubled with a mysterious attraction towards his young relative, for which he cannot account. Accident at last discloses the truth to him, and as a natural consequence of the confessions which immediately follow, they are secretly married, and the young Prince de Bramante for a time disappears from the world. The remainder of the play is occupied with an entanglement of events to serve as a commentary on our author's favorite topic, — the foul ingratitude with which man repays the affection, magnanimity, and self-sacrifice of his feebler companion.

Our readers can now judge what an able and earnest champion the modern doctrine respecting the rights of woman has found in George Sand. We have exhibited more fully the portions of her works, which have a bearing on this subject, because the doctrine, whatever may be thought of its soundness, is the least objectionable among the farrago of strange opinions, which she espouses and defends with so much warmth and ability. Those who wish to know more of her views respecting the evils of the social state and the remedies which are applicable to them, may be satisfied by reading "Leila"; if curious further to ascertain something about her daring speculations on the subject of religion, we refer them to "Spiridion." For our own part, notwithstanding the vigor and eloquence with which both these works are written, far superior in point of style to either of her other publica-

tions, we have no heart to dissect and exhibit them, whether for exposure or refutation. A long wail of discontent and anger with the actual condition and opinions of the civilized portion of our race strikes harshly and gloomily upon the ear; and as we believe it proceeds from a mind incurably diseased, we are willing to let it die away without remark or censure. Though it has significance both as an effect and an omen among the countrymen of the writer, we would fain hope, that there is no congenial element to be affected by it on this side of the Atlantic, and that among us it would remain for ever without a response.

It has been remarked, that the study and imitation of German writers is frequently apparent in Madame Dudevant's writings, and our attempt to give some view of her genius in its various moods would be incomplete, if it afforded no specimen of her success in copying such models. We close this too protracted article with an extract from a very wild and Faust-like sort of drama, entitled "*The Seven Strings of the Lyre*," in which angels and demons play an active part. No account of the general plot and action of the piece is necessary, for it is characteristic of this species of writing, that a detached scene is quite as intelligible as the whole work taken together. The passage may stand, therefore, without introduction or comment.

"*Scene Third. — ALBERTUS and HELENA.*

ALBERTUS (*in great agitation.*) All my efforts are vain ! It is mute for me, silent as Helena, silent as I am myself ! How comes it, that my lips have so long been closed and my tongue fettered, like the vocal power within this instrument ? Why have I never dared to tell Helena that I loved ? Ah ! the Jew has deceived me ; he told me that this talisman would give me the eloquence of love ; but the talisman has no power in my hand. God punishes me for having trusted to the power of phantoms, by taking away my last hope, and giving me to the horrors of despair ! O solitude, I am, then, for ever thy prey ! O desire, insatiable vulture, my heart is thy perpetual food. — (*He folds his arms, and looks mournfully upon Helena. The lyre falls and utters a loud sound. Helena starts and rises.*)

HELENA. It is your voice ! Where are you then ? — (*She looks anxiously around, and after some efforts to recover her memory, perceives the lyre, and seizes it with transport. Immediately the lyre rings loudly again.*)

ALBERTUS. What deep and frightful sounds ! I no longer

believe in the power of the talisman ; but these tones fill me with anxiety and fear !

THE SPIRIT OF THE LYRE. The hour is ceme, O daughter of men ! All my bonds with Heaven are now broken. Now I belong to the earth ; now I am thine. Love me, O daughter of the lyre ; open thy heart to me, that I may dwell there and may cease to inhabit the lyre.

THE SPIRIT OF HELENA (*whilst Helena strikes the string of brass*). Mysterious being, who hast long conversed with me, and hast never shown thyself but to me alone, it seems that I love thee, for I can love nothing upon the earth. But my love is sad and congealed with fear. For I know that thy nature is superior to mine, and I fear to be guilty of sacrilege in daring to love an angel.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LYRE. If you are willing to love me, O Helena ! if you dare to take me, and enclose me within your spirit, I am willing to lose myself there, to be absorbed for ever. Then we shall be united by an indissoluble marriage, and your spirit will see me face to face. O Helena, love me as I love ! Love is powerful, love is great, love is all ; God is love ; for love is the only thing in the heart of man, which can be infinite.

THE SPIRIT OF HELENA. If God is love, it is eternal. Our marriage then will be eternal, and my death will not sunder its ties. Speak to me thus, if thou wilt that I should love thee ; for a thirst after the Infinite preys upon me, and I cannot conceive of love without eternity.

CHOIR OF CELESTIAL SPIRITS. Let us approach, let us surround them, let us hover above their heads ! Let the grace and power of God be here with us. The fatal hour approaches, the decisive hour for our young brother, a captive in the heart of the lyre. Soft spirit of harmony, thou canst not see, thou canst not hear us ! But thy bonds with us are broken, the strings of silver and gold no longer call us forth ; love alone brings us back to thy side. But an earthly love has seized upon thee, has taken away thy memory. Thou no longer knowest us ; thy mournful trial is accomplished ; thy fate is in the hands of a daughter of man. May she remain faithful to the divine instincts, which have preserved her hitherto from an earthly love. O powers of Heaven, let us unite, let us fill the air with the melodious beating of our wings !

ALBERTUS. Behold her in ecstasy, as if she heard a divine language through the silence. O how beautiful is she thus ! Yes, her mind is open to the inspirations of Heaven, and her apparent madness is but the absence of the gross instincts of life. O charming creature, how I libelled thee formerly, when I doubted thy understanding ! How insane was I myself, when

I fought against the emotion which thy beauty inspired. It was an impious thought not to believe that the existence of so much outward beauty was united to that of an intellectual beauty equally perfect. Helena, the powerful tones which thou hast just caused me to hear have opened my soul to the harmonies of the higher world. I feel that thou art celebrating the fire of divine love, and this love fills my heart with delicious hope. Listen to me, Helena ! I would fain say that I love thee, that I understand thee, that my love at last is worthy of thee. Listen to me, for the soul is a lyre, and as thou hast made the other vibrate by thy breath, thou hast awakened by thy look a secret harmony in the depths of my being.—(*He kneels by the side of Helena, who looks at him with surprise.*)

THE SPIRIT OF THE LYRE. Helena ! Helena ! A powerful spirit speaks to you ; a spirit still united with human life, but whose flight already measures the heavens ! A spirit of reflection, of research, of knowledge ! Helena, do not listen to him, for he is not, like you, a child of the lyre ! He is great, he is just, he has light and hope ; but he has not yet lived in the love, which is celebrated by the string of brass. He has loved men, his brethren, too much to be absorbed in thee. Helena, do not listen to him ; fear the tongue of wisdom. You have no need of wisdom, O daughter of the lyre ! You have need only of love. Listen to the voice which sings of love, and not to the one which explains it.

ALBERTUS. Listen, listen, O Helena ! Although the daughter of poetry, thou art bound to hear my voice ; for it comes from the depths of my heart, and true love can never be devoid of poetry, however austere may be its language. Let me tell thee, young girl, that my heart desires thee, and that my intelligence has need of thine. Man alone is incomplete. He is truly man, only when his thought has inspired a soul in union with his own. Do not fear thy master any longer, O my dear Helena ! The master wishes to become thy disciple, and to learn from thee the secrets of Heaven. The designs of God are obscure, and man can be initiated in them only through love. Thou who wast singing yesterday, in such a melting voice, of the crimes and misfortunes of humanity ; thou knowest that blind and misguided men wander upon the slime of earth, like a flock without a shepherd ; thou knowest, that man has lost respect for his ancient law ; thou knowest, that he has forgotten love and polluted marriage ; thou knowest that he has called with loud cries for a new law, a purer love, for broader and stronger ties. Come to my aid, and lend me thy light, thou whom a ray from Heaven has illumined. United in a holy affection, by our happiness and virtues, we will proclaim the will

of God upon earth. Be my companion, my sister and spouse, O dear inspired maid ! Reveal to me the celestial thought, which thou singest upon thy lyre. Supported by each other, we shall be strong enough to beat down all the errors and falsehoods of the false prophets. We will be the apostles of truth ; we will teach our corrupted and despairing brethren the joys of faithful love and the duties of families.

HELENA (*playing upon the lyre*). Listen, O spirit of the lyre ! This is a sacred song, a rich and noble harmony ; but I hardly comprehend it, for it is a voice from the earth, and my ears have long been closed to earthly harmonies. The silver strings resound no longer, the strings of steel have become mute. Explain to me the hymn of wisdom, thou who hast descended from heaven among men !

THE SPIRIT OF THE LYRE. I can no longer explain any thing to thee, O daughter of the lyre ! I can only sing to thee of love. Science I have lost, I have lost it with joy ; for love is greater than knowledge, and thy soul is the universe where I would fain live, the infinite into which I would plunge. Wisdom speaks to thee of toil and duty ; wisdom speaks to thee of wisdom ; thou hast no need of wisdom, if thou hast love. O Helena ! love is the highest wisdom ; virtue is in love, and the most virtuous heart is that which loves the most. Daughter of the lyre, hearken only to me ; I am a living melody, I am a devouring fire. Let us sing and burn together ; let us be an altar, where flame may nourish flame ; and without mingling ourselves with the impure fires, which men kindle upon the altars of false gods, let us nourish each other, and slowly be consumed, until, exhausted with happiness, our ashes shall mingle together, illumined by the rays of the sun, which make the roses bloom, and the doves sing.

ALBERTUS (*to Helena*). Alas ! thou answerest me only by a sublime song, which continually kindles in me more vast desires ; but there is no sympathy between thy song and my prayer. Quit thy lyre, O Helena ! thou hast no need of melody ; thy thought is a song more harmonious than all the strings of the lyre, and virtue is the purest harmony which man can breathe forth towards God.

HELENA (*touching the lyre*). Answer me, O spirit ! O thou, whom I love, and who speakest the language of my spirit ! Shall our love be eternal, and shall not death break our union ? It is not in the rays of the sun, it is not in the calices of roses, it is not in the breasts of doves, that I can satisfy the love, which preys upon me. I feel it mount towards the infinite with ceaseless ardor. I can love only in the infinite ; speak to me only of the infinite and of eternity, if thou wouldest not that the last cord of my heart should break.

THE CELESTIAL SPIRITS. Infinite goodness, eternal love, protect the daughter of the lyre ! Leave not the spark of this divine fire to become extinct in agony ! Celestial mercy, shorten the trial of the spirit, our brother, who languishes and burns upon the string of brass ! Open thy bosom to the children of the lyre, let fall the crown upon the head of the martyrs of love !” — *Tome troisième*, p. 229.

ART. V.—*Biography and Poetical Remains of the late MARGARET MILLER DAVIDSON.* By WASHINGTON IRVING. Philadelphia : Lea & Blanchard. 16mo. pp. 359.

MISS SEDGWICK, in her biographical sketch of Lucretia Maria Davidson, contained in Sparks’s “American Biography,” quotes a production of her younger sister, Margaret, written at the age of eleven years, and says, “ May we be allowed to say, that the mantle of the elder sister has fallen on the younger, and that she seems to be a second impersonation of her spirit ? ” The volume before us confirms the truth of this remark, and the resemblance between the sisters has been made complete by the early death of the younger. We find manifested in Margaret those same moral and intellectual traits which characterized her elder sister, — the same delicacy of organization, the same sensibility, the same strength of affection, and the same remarkably developed intellectual capacity. The physiologist would add that they possessed, and probably inherited, the same diseased quality of brain, which explained their precocity and made an early death almost inevitable.

The memoir by Washington Irving, is as feeling and graceful as we should naturally expect to find any thing from his pen. Much of it is supplied by the mother, Mrs. Davidson, who is evidently of the temperament of genius, and from whom her daughters derived unquestionably their peculiar physical and intellectual organization. We quote a few introductory paragraphs : —

“ The reading world has long set a cherishing value on the name of Lucretia Davidson, a lovely American girl, who, after giving early promise of rare poetic excellence, was snatched from existence in the seventeenth year of her age. An interesting biography of her, by President Morse, of the American